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The state's legislative stalemate with regard to a capital program continues to jeopardize billions of dollars in federal matching funds for transit and road projects, according to U.S. Rep Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park.

Kirk, addressing members of the Transportation Management Association of Lake-Cook Monday morning, said a lack of matching funds from the state puts more than \$4 billion for transit projects and another \$4 billion for road projects at risk.

Kirk said in the battle for federal transportation funding, the enemy isn't Republicans or Democrats, but other states such as Florida and California with underfunded federal road programs and state matching funds ready to go.

"No one would think that in the titanic battle between the states, our own state would fail," Kirk said. "It's like dropping the ball on the five-yard line."

Kirk said Illinois was able to benefit in the past from the clout of former Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, and that the battle will be tougher when future federal transportation bills are written and adopted.

Kirk said October is probably the "political deadline" for Illinois to solidify its matching funds and ensure that the federal money available now remains designated for the state.

Referencing what he called a "Shakespearian battle" taking place among state leaders, Kirk said "we all need to work together regardless of what the governor or the speaker of the General Assembly think."

State Sen. Susan Garrett, D-Lake Forest, and State Rep. Sidney Mathias, R-Buffalo Grove, both attended Monday's TMA meeting held at the HSBC national headquarters building in Mettawa.

Garrett said the state won't be able to provide all of the matching funds that are being sought, but she expressed confidence that a capital bill including matching funds will still be adopted.

"It's not all gloom and doom," she said. "This isn't the end. It's not over yet."

"We do have some responsibility in the General Assembly to make sure that we do not lose any of the federal dollars that we received in the last federal transportation bill," Mathias said. "We must match the transit part and we should review projects in the road program to make sure they are still viable."

Before adjourning, the State Legislature passed an operating budget, but not a capital bill for construction projects and other capital improvements.

Kirk said the state would need to provide \$2.7 billion to receive \$4.1 billion in federal funding for the projects, including Metra and RTA line upgrades and the completion of Metra's proposed STAR line.